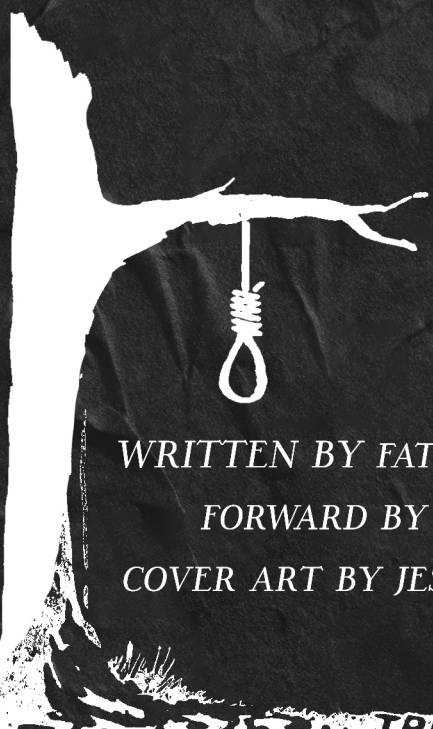
BLACK PEOPLE DON'T HANG THEMSELVES



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TONEA MILLER
JUSTICE
KAI JAMES
KYLE BASINGA
TORY MEDLEY
OTIS JAMES BYRD
JULIANA NZITA
JERARD JACKSON
JAVION MAGEE

FORWARD

When Trump was elected the first time in 2016, a lot of us were rightfully terrified about the normalization of racism that would inevitably sweep across America. Biden's 2020 presidency did very little to slow it down, and Trump's second term has proven to be the worst of our fears manifested.

Racists and bigots of all stripes never disappeared (as any minority group could tell you), but the major difference between the recent past and the past two years is the complete normalization of racism and bigotry, legitimized by the highest offices of power in the land.

Behavior that used to be overwhelmingly berated and rejected is now celebrated by some as the new normal, and dejectedly tolerated by others as the new normal, and the results in either case are the same: It becomes the new normal.

America's history of chattel slavery and the genocide of Native peoples is not ancient history, but it seems to be distant enough in our collective memories that we have forgotten just how abhorrent "normal" behavior can be.

Owning an enslaved person was normal. Raping women was normal. Beating Queer people was normal. Murdering Indigenous people was normal. And when I say "normal", I don't just mean it was legal (which it either was or *effectively* was since such crimes would often go without any justice for the victims), I mean

that a person could perpetrate such a crime in front of their neighbors and they would all go the rest of their lives smiling and waving at each other each morning with a pep in their step and a song in their heart becase they knew, KNEW that they were good people and had done nothing wrong.

The ONLY thing stopping us from backsliding into that way of living is doing our damndest to hold those people accountable by proclaiming through our words and our actions that it is not OK, it is wrong, it is horrible, and it is not who we are. Anything can become "normal" if we don't rise up to meet it with an equal ferocity and say NO!

...

Y'all, they are lynching black people in the United States of America. Today. Not 1 person. Not 2. Not 3. Not 4. Not 5. Not 6. Not 7. I am not kidding. In the time it took me to conceive of making this zine and actually making it, another black person has been lynched.

This is our USA. This is today. This is us. That is bad enough, but there is another horror to address here. These deaths are being "investigated" by the police and being officially ruled as suicides.

I should not have to explain the history of Black people in the US to convince you of a glaring and irrefutable fact:

BLACK PEOPLE DO NOT HANG THEMSELVES

So then, why are the police ruling these deaths as suicides?

Would it surprise you to learn that the origins of modern-day police in America comes from the Slave Patrols of the South in the 1800s? Probably not.

It was the job of the so-called "Slave Catchers" to demand obediance from enslaved people through the use of fear and force. It was *their job* to denigrate, humiliate, brutalize, and murder Black people. So, when we begin the transition to normalizing racism and slavery again, is it any wonder that we see an increase in violence towards Black people? And is it any wonder that the police aren't doing anything about it?

I don't know what their level of complicity is in these murders. They may be the perpetrators or they may just be "doing their jobs". In either case, they do not care about the people they are sworn to protect. They may even hate them for no other reason than the color of their skin. The victims of these absolutely horrendous, heartbreaking crimes deserve better than this.

This has to stop. We have to make it stop.

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT LYNCHING IN 2026

TASIA FORTUNE (29)

MISSISSIPPI AUGUST 2026

Tasia Fortune, 29, was found hanging from a tree behind a vacant Jackson, Mississippi home on August 3. Her death remains under active investigation and her cause and manner of death have not been determined. Her mother insists Fortune did not take her own life, while a Jackson councilman has requested federal assistance with the investigation.

This is an ongoing investigation.

LYNCHING IS NEVER JUST A METHOD OF KILLING.

It is a method of control.

After slavery, Black freedom threatened a white supremacist order that was built upon one thing: Black subjugation.

So terror enforces what law can no longer openly guarantee.

Don't organize.
Don't resist.
Don't become too free.

The rope is a weapon.

But the real technology is fear.

JULIANA UMBA NZITA (16)

NORTH CAROLINA MAY 2026

Nzita, whose family is from the Democratic Republic of Congo, died May 8. She was found hanging near the United House of Prayer for All People in Charlotte. Police classified her death “as suicide” relatively quickly, but her family and community members have challenged that conclusion.

No one has been charged in connection with Juliana’s death.

THE BODY IS A MESSAGE.

Thousands of Black Americans
have been lynched and it's
still happening today.
In 2026.

No one is charged.
No proper investigation.
Authorities don't seek justice
for the victims families.

Because it benefits the people who have
power and the murder of one person
disciplines thousands more with fear.

That is what racial terror does:
It makes violence against one body
imaginable to every other body.

Every lynching is a threat.

TONEA NICOLE MILLER (27)

FLORIDA JUNE 2026

Miller, also known as Nikki, was from Flint, Michigan and was found hanging from a tree in Miami's Gwen Cherry Park on June 18. Early information attributed to the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office characterized the death as "an apparent suicide" and said "foul play was not suspected."

No one has been charged in connection with Miller's death.

THE STORY AFTER THE DEATH MATTERS TOO.

Lynching requires a narrative, not just violence.

"This was a suicide."
"Nothing suspicious happened."
"There is nothing more to investigate."

Ida B. Wells understood that the narrative by authorities is often part of the machinery of the violence.

Power does not only control bodies.

It fights to control the story of what happened to them.

It treats some deaths as not worthy of dignity or justice. This is by design.

NOLAN XAVIER WELLS (18)

MISSISSIPPI JULY 2026

Wells went to Horn Island by boat with his white friends on July 4 and did not return with them. A search began after he was reported missing, and his body was discovered in the water near the island on July 6. Authorities initially indicated drowning was suspected and said they had “not found evidence of foul play.”

The case is being presented to a grand jury. No one has been charged with causing Wells’s death.

HISTORY IS STILL HAPPENING NOW.

To this day, Black people are still being found dead under circumstances that authorities refuse to investigate further while families, journalists, activists, and communities rightfully question the official narratives.

Malcolm X warned us about allowing the same system capable of violence to become the sole narrator of that violence.

So here we are again, going back to the same questions:

Who gets believed?
Whose lives matter?
Who benefits from this violence?

JERARD "JAY" JACKSON (28)

MICHIGAN JUNE 2026

Jackson, an Illinois resident, attended the Electric Forest Festival in Michigan. Jackson was found dead roughly 150 feet into a wooded area near his abandoned vehicle. Michigan State Police said the evidence indicated "suicide" and "no indication of foul play,"pending the medical examiner's final report.

No one has been charged in connection with Jackson's death.

THE PSYCHIC COST OF WATCHING BROTHERS AND SISTERS KILLED WITHOUT EVER RECEIVING JUSTICE.

Look at what domination requires:

Dehumanization.
Fear.
A sanctioned story.
Institutional indifference.
Behind the scenes cover ups.
The average public not caring enough.

Lynchings are not a thing of the past.
And the architecture that made it possible is not either.

The pain of this violence has a psychic cost that never gets to resolve itself because it never stopped happening.

KOHEN KARTIER WILEY (1)

MISSISSIPPI JUNE 2026

Kohen was killed June 14 when a Senatobia police officer fired into a vehicle in a Walmart parking lot while responding to an “alleged” shoplifting call involving diapers. His mother says she tried to show police that her baby was inside the vehicle before the shooting. The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation took over the investigation, while the family and protesters demanded release of body-camera and store-security footage.

No officer has been criminally charged in Kohen’s death.

KOHEN’SMOTHER ASK THAT HIS PHOTO NOT BE SHARED.

THE VIOLENCE DIDN'T END. IT EVOLVED.

Lynching was never only the rope.

It was a system in which Black death and black killings could be inflicted, justified, poorly investigated, or simply accepted without the outrage granted to this who adhere to whiteness.

Sometimes the weapon is a rope.

Sometimes it is a gun.

Sometimes it is an officer whose fear becomes justification for a killing that racial history tells us is not experienced equally.

But it's always disproportionate justice.

COREY RUIZ (38)

WISCONSIN JULY 2026

A Madison police officer shot him during an encounter on July 22. This is fact but what is disputed is whether the shooting was “justified.” Police said officers encountered Ruiz after responding to a report of someone checking parked vehicles and that during the confrontation an officer yelled that Ruiz had a knife, and then Ruiz was shot and killed.

No officer has been criminally charged in Ruiz’s death.

JUSTICE FOR TASIA.

JUSTICE FOR JULIANA.

JUSTICE FOR TONEA.

JUSTICE FOR NOLAN.

JUSTICE FOR JERARD.

JUSTICE FOR KOHEN.

JUSTICE FOR CORY.

JUSTICE FOR ALL.

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